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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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EXAMINER

DOE, SHANTA G

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1797

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

10/14/2009

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/509,746	Applicant(s) QUETEL ET AL.	
	Examiner SHANTA G. DOE	Art Unit 1797	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 13 August 2009.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3-5,7 and 8 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 1 and 3 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) 4,5 and 8 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) 7 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 30 September 2004 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 8/13/2009 has been entered.

Response to Arguments

2. Applicant's arguments with respect to newly amended claim 1 filed on 8/13/2009 have been considered and were persuasive. However, the argument regarding claim 4 and its dependent claims are moot in view of the new grounds of rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

3. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

4. Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

5. Regarding claim 4, the claim is indefinite because claim 1 contains the limitations "a pair of rails forming a path, the pair of rails configured to engage said preform such that said preform necks ride above the pair of rails while bodies of the preform ride

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below the rails" and "a preform feeder device which is adapted for moving said preforms one after the other with neck thereof moving along a path". The examiner is unsure about the difference between the pair of rails and the preform feeder since they both talk about moving the preform along a given path with the neck. It appears as if the pair of rails is describing the preform feeder device. If this is not the case the examiner is unsure about the structural relationship between the preform feeder device and the pair of rails which forms a path. Further, claim 4 contains the limitation stating "a pair of rails forming a patch". The examiner believes word "patch" in this limitation should be replaced with the word "path".

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

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8. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

9. Claims 4, 5 & 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Marchau et al (WO 99/03667) in view of admitted prior art, Swank et al (US 6,183,691), Kuwata et al (JP 06-171697) and Doudement et al (US 5,186,307).

10. Regarding 4, Marchau discloses an installation (system) for the decontamination while they are moving of the necks of preforms (3) delivered one after the other to a loading device (see fig 1), said preforms being made of thermoplastic and being intended for making into containers (e.g. bottle (110)) by blow molding or stretch-blow molding, said

decontamination installation being structurally and functionally connected to a preform feeder installation (2) comprising means for moving the preforms one after the other along a path wherein the feeder is configured to engage said preform such that said perform neck ride above the rail of the feeder while the body of the preform ride below the rail and where the rail of the feeder is disposed between the spray and the bodies of the preform(see fig 1); the decontamination installation contains a means of spraying

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(sprayer 45) the preform with hydrogen peroxide and lamps (104) to decontaminate said preform (Marchau (WO 99/03667 fig 1 page 3 paragraph 5; page 5 paragraph 2; page 6 paragraph 8; page 7 paragraph 1-4; page 11 paragraph 2).

However Marchau does not disclose an installation for decontaminating preforms wherein said decontamination installation comprises ultraviolet lamps arranged so that the ultraviolet radiation completely irradiates the necks of the moving preforms, wherein the decontamination installation also includes, upstream of the ultraviolet lamps, a chamber traversed by said preforms movement means of the feeder installation and in which means are provided for spraying (sprayer 45 above the preforms movement means) a decontaminating product continuously towards necks of said preform so as to wet inside and outside surfaces of the necks and so as to maintain a fog of the decontaminating product inside said chamber. Additionally, Marchau fails to disclose that a suction means is connected to the decontamination chamber and that the preform feeder comprises a pair of rails forming a path.

Swank ('691) discloses a decontaminating/sterilizing system (installation) for partially formed material (20), wherein, as the partially formed material are fed one after the other into a container manufacturing unit, the partially formed materials pass first through an upstream chamber (sterilization chamber (28)) into which hydrogen peroxide is sprayed (liquid hydrogen peroxide is vaporized at 175 degrees in the presence of air/air is saturated with hydrogen peroxide vapor the mixture exits the spray nozzle at 80 - 90 degrees and it is known that air saturated with H₂O₂ vapor forms condensation droplet of H₂O₂ in air (mist or fog) when temperature decreases) continuously towards

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necks of said preforms so as to maintain in this chamber a fog atmosphere of said decontaminating product with which the necks of the preforms are brought into contact, and then passes wetted necks in front of ultraviolet lamps arranged so as to completely irradiate the necks of the partially formed materials wetted by the decontaminating product for at least a minimum predetermined period of time, before reaching a device that loads them into the manufacturing unit (see Swank ('691) abs; fig. 2; col. 4 lines 40 - 65; col. 5 lines 30-40 and col. 6 lines 47 - 63).

Kuwata et al. (JP 06-171697) discloses sterilization or decontaminating room/enclosure with a suction means connected to the enclosure in order discharge/remove air form the enclosure (see Kuwata abs).

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the decontamination installation of Marchau with the decontamination system taught by Swank since Swank discloses that it was known in the art at the time the invention was made to use such an installation to decontaminate partially formed containers in a fabrication process stated at col. 4 lines 60 - 65 that such a modification provides for a synergistic sterilization effect between the UV radiation and hydrogen peroxide.

Furthermore, in view Kuwata et al., it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have the combination above further comprise a suction means connected to the decontamination chamber/enclosure as taught by Kuwata because as stated by Kuwata such a modification would allow air from the enclosure to be removed thereby removing spent decontaminating fog.

Doudement et al (US 5,186,307) discloses that a preform feeder comprising a pair of rails form a path configured to engage said preform such that said preform necks ride above the rail of the feeder rail while the bodies of the preforms ride below the rail (see abs and fig 3).

In view of Doudement, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have the preform feeder of the combined reference comprise a pair of rails as disclosed/taught by Doudement, since the feeder of Doudement is a known functionally equivalent means known in the art for feeding a preform.

Regarding claims 5, the combined references disclose the installation as claimed in claim 4, wherein there is a sprayer which aims roughly in the direction of the necks of the moving preforms (see fig 1). However the combination does not disclose the installation of claim 4 wherein the spray means comprise at least two spray nozzles arranged one on either side of the preforms movement means and above these, with their respective axes aimed roughly in the direction of the necks of the moving preforms. However, the applicant admits that it is conventional to place the neck of each preform under a decontaminant source to decontaminate the neck of preform wherein the decontaminant source is distributed on either side of the perform movement means (see applicant's specification page 2 lines 5 -line 20).

Swank ('691) discloses a decontamination installation comprising applicators / sprayers (30A and 30B) which may be nozzles for spraying hydrogen peroxide (see

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Swank col. 6 lines 47 - 63). It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have the sprayers of the hydrogen peroxide (decontaminant source) of the combined references be arranged one on either side of the preform movement means and above these, since it was conventional to do so as admitted by the applicant.

Further more it would have been obvious to use a nozzle as the spraying means since it is well known in the art to use nozzle as a spraying means.

Regarding claim 8, the combined references disclose the installation as claimed in claims 4. The combination does not disclose the installation of claim 4 wherein the preform movement means comprises an inclined slideway (slide guide) down which the preforms slide by gravity one after the other and that this slideway passes through the chamber.

However, the applicant admits that it is known in the art to use a preform movement means comprising an inclined slideway (slide guide) down which the preforms slide by gravity one after the other in a decontamination installation in that this slideway passes through the chamber (see applicant's specification page 2 lines 5 – line 20).

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use the feeding means taught in the admitted prior art since it was known in the art at the time as a conventional preform movement means.

Allowable Subject Matter

11. Claims 1 & 3 are allowed.

12. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

13. Regarding claim 1, the prior art fails to disclose a method of decontaminating necks of thermoplastic preforms before said preforms are blow molded comprising providing a pair of rails forming a path, the pair of rails configured to engage said preform such that the preform necks ride above the pair of rails while bodies of the preforms ride below the rail wherein the pair of rails is disposed between the spraying means and the bodies of the preforms; passing the preforms one after another through an upstream chamber inside which the preform necks move along the path.

Claim 3 is allowable based on its dependency on claim 1.

14. Claim 7 objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 7 is indicated as allowable because the installation as claimed in claim 4, wherein the preform movement means are surmounted, above the necks of the preforms, by a

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rod of relatively small transverse dimension relative to the diameter of the necks could not be found in the prior art.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to SHANTA G. DOE whose telephone number is (571)270-3152. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri 8am-5pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Walter Griffin can be reached on 571-272-1447. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

GSD

/Walter D. Griffin/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 1797